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Docket No.: GR 97 P 3757


MICHAEL BURNS

Date: April 3, 2000

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Enclosed herewith are the necessary papers for filing the following application for Letters Patent:

Applicant : KARL WAEDT

Title : RESPONSIVE SYSTEM FOR DIGITAL SIGNAL PROCESSING
AND METHOD FOR OPERATION OF A RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

1 sheet of formal drawings in triplicate.

A check in the amount of \$690.00 covering the filing fee.

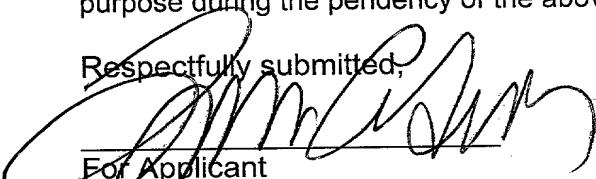
Information Disclosure Statement and 4 References.

PCT Publication (cover sheet only).

This application is being filed without a signed oath or declaration under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.53(d). Applicants await notification of the date by which the oath or declaration and the surcharge are due, pursuant to this rule.

The Patent and Trademark Office is hereby given authority to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1099 of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A. for any fees due or deficiencies of payments made for any purpose during the pendency of the above-identified application.

Respectfully submitted,


For Applicant
LAG:tg

LAURENCE A. GREENBERG
REG. NO. 29,308

RESPONSIVE SYSTEM FOR DIGITAL SIGNAL PROCESSING
AND METHOD FOR OPERATION OF A RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

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Cross-Reference to Related Application:

This application is a continuation of copending International Application No. PCT/EP98/06003, filed September 21, 1998, which designated the United States.

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Background of the Invention:

Field of the Invention:

The invention relates to a responsive system for signal processing having a plurality of data processing units which are connected to one another through a data transmission unit and on which computer programs are implemented. The invention furthermore relates to a method for operation of a responsive system.

20 Responsive systems, that is to say fault-tolerant systems and systems which can operate in real time, for signal processing, are widely used in industrial automation processes. Such a responsive system is known from German Patent DE 44 46 286 C1. The responsive system includes a plurality of data processing units, which communicate with one another through data transmission units. An associated update status is stored for

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each of the computer programs implemented on the data processing units.

A responsive system is particularly important in an automation process in which it is necessary to comply with predetermined time limits, or to produce output signals within predetermined time intervals. Such requirements frequently occur in manufacturing processes, regulation and control processes and monitoring processes, for example in the safety control system for a nuclear power station. Compliance with time limits or time intervals is critically dependent on the individual equipment-specific and program-specific components being suitable for their function.

In a complex system, in which a plurality of data processing units are connected to one another to form a large data network, faults in the program-specific components, in particular faults in a computer program, are of particular importance. Those faults, so-called software faults, may amount to up to 60% of the total number of system faults. In that case, the faults can be split into three groups. So-called specification faults are the most common, representing 55%. Maintenance faults have a proportion of approximately 25% and are approximately equally as important as implementation faults, which make up approximately 20%.

A specification fault occurs, for example, when a signal which is processed in the respective computer programs of different data processing units is deleted or newly added during a revision or modification of a specification on which the

5 responsive system is based, with the deletion or the addition of that signal not being implemented at the same time on all of the data processing units. In other words, a newly added signal or a signal which is omitted during a revision leads to modifications not only to the computer programs of the

10 respective related data processing units, but also to modifications to the structure or the layout of messages which have to be transmitted between different data processing units and transmit the new signal. In that case, if all of the relevant data processing units are not updated at the same time, it is possible for incompatibilities to occur between them. That can lead to a time overrun occurring during the execution of computer programs which have not yet been modified. Such a time overrun causes that data processing unit to fail.

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Summary of the Invention:

It is accordingly an object of the invention to provide a responsive system for signal processing, in particular for digital signal processing, which is particularly reliable even

25 when subject to frequent revision, and thus allows consistent operation of a computer program integrated in the responsive

system, as well as a method for consistent operation of the responsive system for signal processing, which overcome the hereinafore-mentioned disadvantages of the heretofore-known systems and methods of this general type.

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With the foregoing and other objects in view there is provided, in accordance with the invention, a responsive system for signal processing, comprising a data transmission unit; and a plurality of data processing units communicating with one another through the data transmission unit, the data processing units implementing at least one computer program dependent on a respective update status; each of the data processing units, during each communication, assigning a revision identity characterizing its update status to a signal produced by the data processing unit; one of the data processing units receiving the signal, performing a comparison to determine if the revision identity characterizing the received signal matches a revision identity stored for that signal; and the data processing unit receiving the signal performing regular processing of the signal if the received revision identity matches the stored revision identity and otherwise not performing regular processing of the signal.

In this case the invention is based on the concept that, even when a modification is made to an individual computer program, there is an objective of reliably avoiding disconnection or

failure of a responsive system which includes a number of data processing units and which is used, for example, in the safety control system of a pressurized-water reactor. Particularly in a safety control system in which the data processing units

5 may have a redundant structure, it is possible, during a revision of the computer programs (so-called specification modification) for the updating of the relevant data processing units to be carried out at different times. This normally leads to incompatibility between these data processing units.

10 The responsive system should thus also be insensitive to modifications to only one data processing unit.

In other words: modifications to the computer program or to the software, for example the deletion of signals or the

5 addition of new signals, should initially be possible only in one data processing unit. The messages which contain the transmitted signals have appropriate status information or an update status for this purpose. The compatibility of the receiving data processing unit with the received signal is

20 determined by comparing this update status with the update status stored in the receiving data processing unit, in order to determine whether the signal relates to the same specification, or to a modified specification. If the specifications match, an appropriate status information item

25 may be set, such as "Status OK". If they do not match, the

status information item "Status Error" may be set in a corresponding manner.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, each data 5 processing unit includes an analysis module for carrying out the comparison.

In accordance with a further feature of the invention, in order to carry out the comparison, the responsive system 10 expediently includes a first database in which the respective update status of the signals and/or the computer programs is stored, and a second database in which future modifications or revisions of respective signals to be modified and/or to respective computer programs to be modified are stored.

15 In accordance with an added feature of the invention, there is provided a service system for updating the computer programs and/or the signals of the data processing units and, in consequence, also for monitoring the consistency of all data 20 processing units.

With the objects of the invention in view, there is also provided a method for consistent operation of a responsive system for digital signal processing, which comprises 25 providing a data transmission unit; providing a plurality of data processing units communicating with one another through

the data transmission unit; implementing at least one computer program depending on a respective update status in the data processing units; producing a signal with one of the data processing units, and assigning a revision identity to the
5 signal characterizing an update status of the signal, for each communication; carrying out a comparison in one of the data processing units receiving a signal to determine if the revision identity characterizing the received signal matches a revision identity stored for that signal; and carrying out regular processing of the signal if the revision identities match, and otherwise not carrying out the regular processing of the signal.

10 The signal is expediently interchanged in a data message between two processing units. In accordance with another mode of the invention, the stored revision identity is stored in an analysis module in the receiving data processing unit, and/or in a database. The comparison of the specifications is carried out by using this revision identity stored in the
20 analysis module and/or in the database.

15 The data message preferably includes an information part and a signal part. For example, the information part of the data message includes information, in particular identification numbers, of the receiving and transmitting data processing units, as well as information relating to whether the
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transmitting data processing unit is in a test mode or in the normal mode. The signal part includes the signals to be processed in the receiving data processing unit, together with the respective revision identities characterizing them.

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In accordance with a further mode of the invention, the revision identity characterizing the signal and the revision identity stored for the signal are expediently incremented by the value one for a revision or modification to the specification relating to this signal.

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In accordance with a concomitant mode of the invention, if a signal is deleted or removed, the revision identity stored for this signal and the revision identity characterizing the signal are advantageously provided with a negative mathematical sign.

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The advantages achieved by the invention are, in particular, that the comparison of the revision identity characterizing a received signal with the revision identity stored for this signal makes it possible for the receiving data processing unit to process only those signals which relate to one and the same specification. It is thus possible to detect the compatibility of the signals received from another data processing unit with the signals to be processed in the receiving data processing unit. This largely avoids data

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processing unit failures resulting from specification faults or maintenance faults. A responsive system of such a structure in which the method for consistent operation, in particular for consistent maintenance, is used, is thus 5 particularly economical and effective with regard to its availability and with regard to its use as an automation system in a nuclear power station.

Other features which are considered as characteristic for the

10 invention are set forth in the appended claims.

Although the invention is illustrated and described herein as embodied in a responsive system for digital signal processing as well as a method for operation of a responsive system, it is nevertheless not intended to be limited to the details 15 shown, since various modifications and structural changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention and within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims.

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The construction and method of operation of the invention, however, together with additional objects and advantages thereof will be best understood from the following description of specific embodiments when read in connection with the 25 accompanying drawing.

Brief Description of the Drawings:

The figure of the drawing is a block diagram of an exemplary embodiment of a responsive system for digital signal processing.

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Description of the Preferred Embodiments:

Referring now in detail to the single figure of the drawing, there is seen a responsive system 1 which includes a large number of data processing units 2A to 2Z that are connected to one another through a data transmission unit 4. The data transmission unit 4 is a standardized transmission line, for example an Ethernet coaxial cable, and has standardized non-illustrated transmission elements, such as amplifiers, repeaters or bridges. The data processing units 2A to 2Z are connected through the use of the data transmission unit 4 to form a computer network. The responsive system 1 is suitable in particular for controlling and monitoring a technical system, in particular a nuclear power station.

10 Each data processing unit 2A to 2Z is suitable for processing two types of messages. One type is a received message 6, which is received in a data processing unit 2A from another data processing unit 2B. The other type is a transmitted message 8, which is transmitted or sent from a data processing unit 2A to another data processing unit 2B. In this case, 15 each received message 6 and each transmitted message 8 has a

respective message header 6A and 8A, and a respective signal part 6B and 8B.

During operation of the nuclear power station, large amounts of data, in the form of control commands and status messages as well as defect messages (which will be referred to below as signals S) are transmitted between the data processing units 2A to 2Z through the data transmission unit 4. In this case, the signals S are combined to form messages. If an update status of some of the data processing units 2A to 2Z differs, according to the prior art that could lead to incompatibilities between received signals S from another data processing unit 2A and the signals S to be processed by the receiving data processing unit 2B. That would lead to instabilities in the processing of the computer programs in the receiving data processing unit 2A, 2B. Those instabilities are reliably avoided by measures described in the following text.

Furthermore, each data processing unit 2A to 2Z is connected to a service system 10. The service system 10 monitors the message traffic between the data processing units 2A to 2Z.

At least one computer program SW is implemented on each data processing unit 2A to 2Z and is provided in a modular form from a number of functional modules FB. Any modification to the specification of the responsive system 1, for example

signals S to be newly added or signals S to be deleted, is transmitted through the use of the service system 10 to the relevant data processing units 2A to 2Z. When such a modification to the specification occurs, on one hand, the 5 functional modules FB on the relevant data processing units 2A to 2Z are modified and are thus matched. On the other hand, the structure or the layout of the relevant received messages 6 as well as the relevant transmitted messages 8 is modified and thus matched with regard to the new signals S or the 10 signals S to be deleted.

The responsive system 1 includes a first database 12 and a second database 14, which are each connected to the service system 10. The first database 12 contains the present 15 specification or the respective update states of the computer programs SW, with the respective associated functional modules FB of all of the data processing units 2A to 2Z as well as the layout of the received messages 6 and of the transmitted messages 8 of all of the data processing units 2A to 2Z. Furthermore, the first database 12 in each case stores a 20 revision identity R for each computer program SW and for each signal S of each received message 6 and of each transmitted message 8, as the update status.

25 The structure of the second database 14 is identical to that of the first database 12. The second database 14 likewise

stores all of the computer programs SW as well as all of the signals S with the respective associated current revision identity R. Modifications to the specification or revisions of computer programs SW which now respectively need to be 5 modified, and/or signals S to be modified are entered or recorded in the second database 14.

An integer is stored as a previous or current revision identity R, in both the first database 12 and the second 10 database 14. For example, all of the signals S which are modified during a first modification to the specification, a so-called first revision, are given the revision identity $R = +1$. The signals S modified in the next specification modification are given the revision identity $R = +2$, that is 15 to say a revision identity R incremented by the value 1. The signals S deleted in the second modification are given the revision identity $R = -2$, in which case the negative mathematical sign indicates that the signal S has been deleted. Signals S or computer programs SW to be newly added 20 are attached to the end of the message and to the second database 14, in which case these signals S are given a positive revision identity R. An analogous procedure is used for every other specification modification or revision. That is to say, the number $R = +4$ or $R = -4$ is given to the 25 modified signals S as the revision identity R for a fourth specification modification.

Once they have been entered in the second database 14 through the use of the service system 10, the specification modifications are transmitted to the relevant data processing 5 units 2A to 2Z. A deleted signal S is not deleted in all of the received messages 6 and transmitted messages 8 until the computer program SW in all of the data processing units 2A to 2Z has been updated. This ensures that the modifications in the computer programs SW of all of the relevant data 10 processing units 2A to 2Z have also actually been implemented.

After the updating of all of the relevant data processing units 2A to 2Z, all of the relevant received messages 6 and all of the relevant transmitted messages 8 in accordance with 5 the revision being carried out, the updated specification is transferred to the first database 12, through the use of the service system 10.

Subsequent specification modifications or revisions are once 20 again firstly stored in the second database 14. In other words, if the contents of the first database 12 are identical to the contents of the second database 14, all of the data processing units 2A to 2Z are matched to the same specification.

In order to avoid a failure of a data processing unit 2A to 2Z which, for example, have not yet been updated, each data processing unit 2A to 2Z also includes an analysis module 16. During operation, the analysis module 16 checks the correctness of each signal S contained in the received message 5 from another data processing unit 2A to 2Z, using the revision identity R stored in the receiving data processing unit 2A to 2Z, and the associated current revision identity R. This check during operation is explained in more detail in the 10 following text:

For checking purposes, the corresponding specification of the associated data processing unit 2A to 2Z, that is to say the previous revision identities R or the revision identities R on 15 which a current change is based, of the respective computer programs SW and of the signals S, is stored in the respective analysis module 16. The data processing unit 2B, which transmits a transmitted message 8 to another data processing unit 2A, in each case assigns to each signal S being produced 20 and to be transmitted the revision identity R characterizing its update status.

This transmitted message 8 is received by the other data processing unit 2A as the received message 6. The receiving 25 data processing unit 2A then uses the analysis module 16 to compare for a match between the revision identity R

characterizing the signal S, and the revision identity R stored for this signal S. If the received revision identity R matches the stored revision identity R', that is to say if the specifications of the two communicating data processing units 5 2A, 2B match, the signal S is given the status information item "Status = ok", and is passed on for signal processing in accordance with the computer program SW. If they do not match, the signal S is given the status information item "Status = Error", and is not processed.

10 The analysis module 16 is updated with regard to a new specification by the specification modification transmitted to the associated data processing unit 2A to 2Z through the use of the service system 10. In this case, the previous revision 15 identities R (stored in the analysis module 16) of the signals S and/or of the computer programs SW are replaced by the current revision identities R.

20 The advantages achieved by the invention are, in particular, that consistent and transparent operation is ensured through the use of the comparison of the revision identities R, even after specification modifications in the individual data processing units 2A to 2Z. The responsive system 1 for 25 digital signal processing is thus particularly suitable for incremental maintenance.

I claim:

1. A responsive system for digital signal processing,

comprising:

a data transmission unit; and

a plurality of data processing units communicating with one another through said data transmission unit, said data processing units implementing at least one computer program dependent on a respective update status;

a) each of said data processing units, during each communication, assigning a revision identity characterizing its update status to a signal produced by said data processing unit;

b) one of said data processing units receiving the signal, performing a comparison to determine if the revision identity characterizing the received signal matches a revision identity stored for that signal; and

c) said data processing unit receiving the signal performing regular processing of the signal if the received revision identity matches the stored revision identity and otherwise not performing regular processing of the signal.

2. The responsive system according to claim 1, wherein each of said data processing units has an analysis module for carrying out the comparison.

3. The responsive system according to claim 1, including a first database storing the respective update status of at least one of the signals and the computer programs of all of said data processing units, and a second database storing at least one of future modifications or revisions of respective signals to be modified and respective computer programs to be modified.

4. The responsive system according to claim 1, including a service system for updating at least one of the computer programs and the signals of said data processing units.

5. A method for operation of a responsive system for digital signal processing, which comprises:

a) providing a data transmission unit;

b) providing a plurality of data processing units communicating with one another through the data transmission unit;

c) implementing at least one computer program depending on a respective update status in the data processing units;

d) producing a signal with one of the data processing units, and assigning a revision identity to the signal characterizing an update status of the signal, for each communication;

e) carrying out a comparison in one of the data processing units receiving a signal to determine if the revision identity characterizing the received signal matches a revision identity stored for that signal; and

f) carrying out regular processing of the signal if the revision identities match, and otherwise not carrying out the regular processing of the signal.

6. The method according to claim 5, which further comprises storing the stored revision identity in an analysis module in the data processing unit receiving the signal and in a database.

7. The method according to claim 5, which further comprises storing the stored revision identity in a database.

8. The method according to claim 5, which further comprises storing the stored revision identity in an analysis module in the data processing unit receiving the signal.

9. The method according to claim 6, which further comprises incrementing the revision identity characterizing the signal and the revision identity stored for the signal by a value of one for a revision relating to that signal.

10. The method according to claim 7, which further comprises incrementing the revision identity characterizing the signal and the revision identity stored for the signal by a value of one for a revision relating to that signal.

11. The method according to claim 8, which further comprises incrementing the revision identity characterizing the signal and the revision identity stored for the signal by a value of one for a revision relating to the signal.

12. The method according to claim 6, which further comprises providing the revision identity characterizing the signal, and the revision identity stored for the signal, with a negative mathematical sign when the signal is removed.

13. The method according to claim 7, which further comprises providing the revision identity characterizing the signal, and

the revision identity stored for the signal, with a negative mathematical sign when the signal is removed.

14. The method according to claim 8, which further comprises providing the revision identity characterizing the signal, and the revision identity stored for the signal, with a negative mathematical sign when the signal is removed.

Abstract of the Disclosure:

A responsive system for digital signal processing and a method for operation of the responsive system implement computer

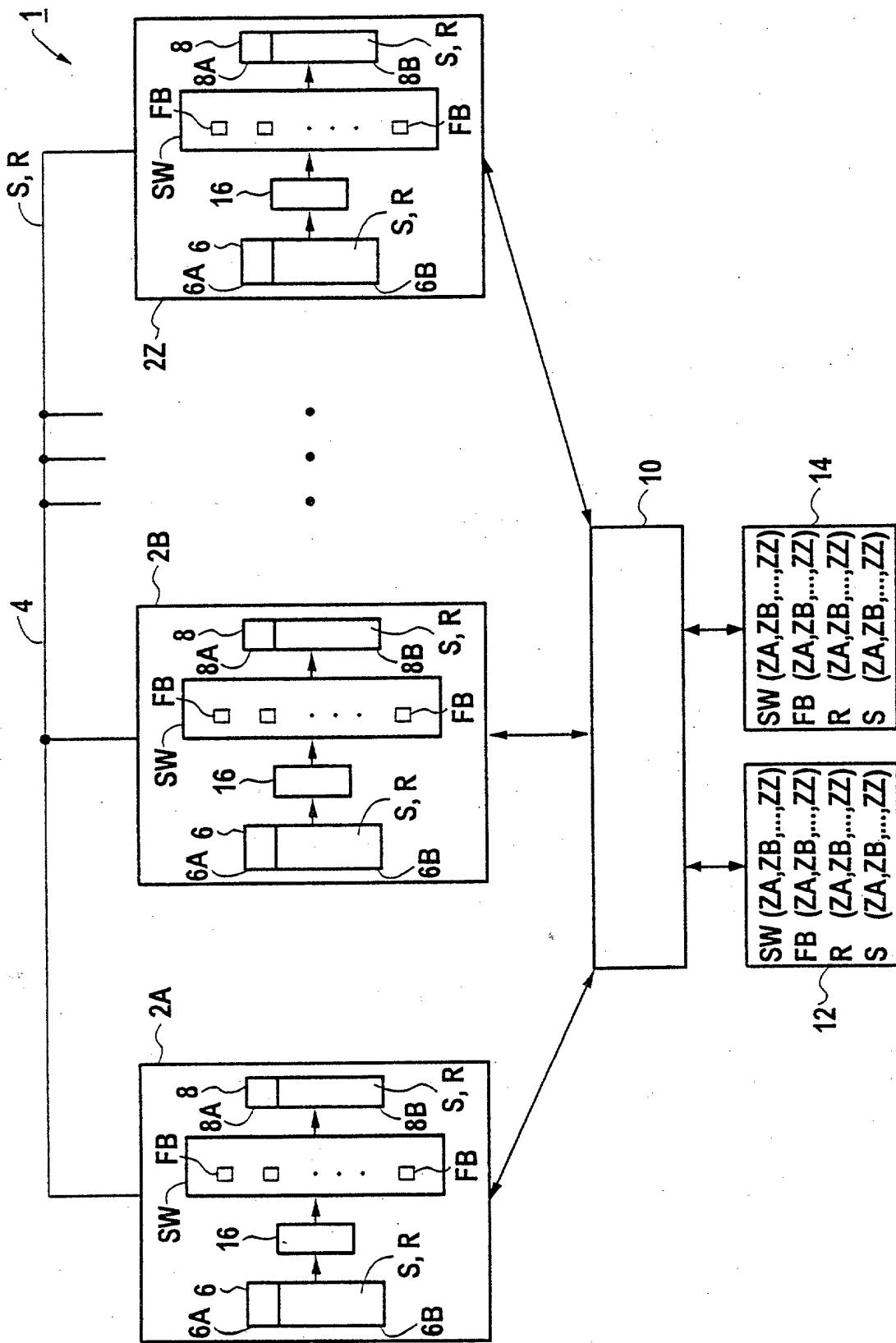
5 programs, which are dependent on a respective update status, in data processing units that communicate with one another through a data transmission unit, in order to make the responsive system particularly reliable, even when subject to frequent revision. During each communication, each data

10 processing unit assigns a revision identity characterizing its update status to a signal produced by it. A data processing unit receiving the signal carries out a comparison to determine if the revision identity characterizing the signal matches a revision identity stored for that signal and, if the

15 revision identities match, the signal is processed.

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ERKLÄRUNG FÜR PATENTANMELDUNGEN MIT VOLLMACHT

German Language Declaration

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Gegenstandes bin, für den dieser Antrag gestellt wird und für
den ein Patent für die Erfindung mit folgendem Titel
beantragt wird:

RESPONSIVES SYSTEM ZUR DIGITALEN
SIGNALVERARBEITUNG SOWIE VERFAHREN ZUM
BETRIEB EINES RESPONSIVEN SYSTEMS

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Ich bestätige hiermit, daß ich den Inhalt der oben
angegebenen Patentanmeldung, einschließlich der
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Ich erkenne meine Pflicht zur Offenbarung jeglicher
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As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as
stated next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one
name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor
(if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which
is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention
entitled:

RESPONSIVE SYSTEM FOR DIGITAL SIGNAL
PROCESSING AND METHOD FOR OPERATION OF A
RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the
following box is checked:

was filed on _____ as United
States Application Number or PCT International
Application Number

_____ and was amended on

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I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the
contents of the above identified specification, including the
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I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is
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German Language Declaration

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Prior Foreign Applications (Frühere ausländische Anmeldungen)

197 43 758,3 (Number) (Nummer)	Germany (Country) (Land)
 (Number) (Nummer)	 (Country) (Land)

Ich beanspruche hiermit Prioritätsvorteile unter Title 35, US-Code, § 119(e) aller US-Hilfsanmeldungen wie unten aufgezählt.

 (Application No.) (Aktenzeichen)	 (Filing Date) (Anmeldetag)
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PCT/EP98/06003 (Application No.) (Aktenzeichen)	September 21, 1998 (Filing Date) (Anmeldetag)
 (Application No.) (Aktenzeichen)	 (Filing Date) (Anmeldetag)

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I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, §119 (a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365 (a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed
Priorität nicht beansprucht

10/02/1997

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(Tag/Monat/Jahr der Anmeldung)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(Tag/Monat/Jahr der Anmeldung)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s), or §365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

(Status)(patented, pending, abandoned)
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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

German Language Declaration

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